

The sad irony here is that Bennie himself died at the age of 61. When one heard Bennie speak those words, one didn't think that he was talking about himself. I think that everyone close to him assumed that he had come so far in life that he would beat the odds.

And indeed Reverend Thayer had come very far from his birthplace in Pickens County, South Carolina. He was fully 36 when he received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland, 54 when he received his master's in divinity, and 58 when he received his doctorate of divinity. His biography shows the mark of a man who was always striving, always working to create the next opportunity. But when you look carefully at the opportunities that he sought, they so frequently centered on creating new hopes for others—promoting economic opportunities with the National Association of the Self-Employed, spiritual guidance through his ministry, bequeathing wealth to our children and our grandchildren through reform of the Social Security system. This theme of striving to create a constructive and uplifting legacy ran throughout his life and throughout his work.

Dr. Thayer was an extraordinary man who led an extraordinary life. He is already deeply missed.●

HONORING THE WORK OF ANTHONY ROMOLO

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Tony Romolo, in whose honor the Anthony C. Romolo Training Center in Mt. Sterling, Illinois, is being dedicated this month.

Tony Romolo was the Center's founding administrator and is now the longest-serving training administrator within the Laborers' International Union of North America.

As administrator, Tony has been responsible for creating policies that have guided the procedures and management of the training center, including the development of training goals and priorities. His leadership has resulted in the training of thousands of laborers throughout Illinois.

The Laborers' Training Program was one of the first within the State of Illinois to receive accreditation from the Illinois Department of Public Health for teaching environmentally beneficial courses in asbestos abatement. Mr. Romolo also oversaw the creation of the Construction Craft Laborers' Apprenticeship Program that was approved February 3, 1997.

Tony Romolo's work has been diverse but unwavering in its commitment to improving the skills of our nation's workers. We are fortunate to have dedicated, hard-working men like Tony in our society today. Illinois is a better place because of his commitment to the working men and women of our state and country.●

TRIBUTE TO WORKERS AT THE PADUCAH GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANT

● Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the thousands of workers, both past and present, at the Gaseous Diffusion Plants in Paducah, Portsmouth, and Oak Ridge for their patience and persistence through what has been, and continues to be, a challenging time.

When the reports of contamination broke in the August 8, 1999 edition of the Washington Post, my first thoughts were of the individuals and families who had suffered because of DOE's mistakes. I thought of the pain those workers must have endured from the illnesses and continue to endure in many cases, and the sense of loss families must have felt for those whose loved ones did not survive the harsh effects of contamination.

The story of the Harding Family, of Paducah, still haunts me. To think that a man suffered and died a painful death because of the carelessness of officials at the Department of Energy is incomprehensible. My heart goes out to the Harding Family for the loss of Mr. Joe Harding, and I hope that this dear family can take some solace in the knowledge that it was because of Joe's persistence that this story came to light. Because of Joe's willingness to speak in the face of high-powered opposition, at least 120 other workers who suffer effects of contamination will now be treated and compensated by the United States government. Joe paid the ultimate price in his death, and for that he deserves our sympathy, our respect, and our gratitude.

From that very first moment the story broke, I have been determined to make sure all current and former employees are tested for contamination and that sick employees receive the treatment they need and deserve. Of course, nothing can take the place of good health or life, but every effort should be made to provide compensation for DOE's wrongs.

I want the workers in Paducah, Portsmouth, and Oak Ridge to know that I am working here in the Senate to ensure that they are adequately tested and treated for any problems they experience as a result of contamination at the plant. I have continually sought funding, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and am pleased to have played a role in providing the funding to make health testing equipment, such as the vital lung screening van for Paducah, available to all of the dedicated workers who have served at the each of the Gaseous Diffusion Plants.

The mobile lung screening unit should serve as a symbol to each of the workers and their families that we will keep fighting for your health and safety, for your economic livelihood, and for the cleanup of the plant sites and surrounding neighborhoods.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Senate, I want to say thank you to the employees at the plants for their service to the United States. Your sacrifice to help us win the Cold War will never be forgotten.●

HONORING DR. ORLANDO EDREIRA

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Dr. Orlando Edreira. Dr. Edreira's hard work and dedication as a Councilman in Elizabeth, New Jersey has had a lasting impact on communities throughout Union County and the State of New Jersey.

For more than four decades, Councilman Edreira has been contributing to the future of our children and the improvement of our communities as both an educator and a civil servant. He has contributed to hundreds of community projects and has been a member of numerous professional and community-based organizations in New Jersey. Councilman Edreira has also been a well-recognized and respected advocate for the Latino community of New Jersey throughout his career.

I salute Councilman Edreira's leadership in Elizabeth, which during his service has enjoyed a remarkable economic renaissance as new jobs and economic development have brought new life to one of New Jersey's historic cities. He is to be thanked for helping to sow these seeds of revitalization in the community.

Councilman Edreira's retirement from the Elizabeth City Council is a true loss for both the City of Elizabeth and the entire State of New Jersey. After a career marked by many accomplishments, I am pleased today to highlight his remarkable record of service on the occasion of his retirement. While we are losing one of our State's finest and most valuable leaders, we can take pride in the countless contributions that Councilman Edreira has made to one of New Jersey's most important communities.●

A TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL AGENT DAVID J. WILSON

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, during the 106th Congress, the Detroit Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation lost two of its most dedicated agents to battles with cancer. Both were respected not only for their professional accomplishments, but also for the manner in which they conducted themselves outside of their work, as each contributed considerably to the Detroit community. I rise today in honor and in memory of Special Agent David J. Wilson, one of these two men.

Before joining the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1980, Special Agent Wilson served the Nation as a military police officer, earning the National Defense, Marksman and Sharpshooter